

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 HA-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

ICAE-00 EUR-12 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 CA-01 SCS-06 EB-08 /080 W

-----072526 031140Z /10

O 031119Z AUG 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2837

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

JCS WASHDC PRIORITY

CSAF WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

UNCLAS GENEVA 11893

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, UNHCR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: UNHCR REQUEST FOR AIRLIFT OF BLANKETS TO ZAIRE

1. MISSION HAS JUST RECEIVED REQUEST FROM UNHCR (VON ARNIM) FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE IN AIRLIFTING URGENTLY APPROXIMATELY 30,000 BLANKETS FROM GERMANY TO KINSHASA.

2. VON ARNIM EXPLAINED THAT UNHCR HAS RECEIVED GIFT PLEDGE FOR 30,000 OR MORE BLANKETS (TO CONSTITUTE A PLANE LOAD) FROM CARITAS GERMANY IN FREIBURG. THESE ARE INTENDED FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 60,000 ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BAS-ZAIRE PROVINCE, WHOSE NUMBERS ARE STILL INCREASING, ACCORDING TO VON ARNIM, AND MANY OF WHOM ARE "DESTITUTE" AND IN A "PITIABLE" CONDITION. HE STATED THAT CARITAS DOES NOT HAVE FUNDS FOR THE AIRLIFT OF THESE BLANKETS TO ZAIRE, WHOSE COST IS ESTIMATED BETWEEN \$50,000 AND \$60,000 BY COMMERCIAL AIR FREIGHT. WEIGHT OF THE SHIPMENT, BASED ON A TOTAL OF 30,000 UNITS IS 36 TONS. VON ARNIM'S REQUEST WAS DIRECTED  
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TOWARD ANY U.S. MILITARY AIRLIFT SPACE THAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE, WHETHER FOR THE TOTAL SHIPMENT OR A PORTION THEREOF, BETWEEN GERMANY AND KINSHASA. HE STATED THAT CARITAS COULD DEPOSIT THE BLANKETS AT ANY POINT IN GERMANY FOR PICKUP BY USAF.

3. VON ARNIM SAID THAT THE MATTER WAS "RATHER URGENT" IN

VIEW OF THE POOR CONDITION OF THE REFUGEES AND THE ONSET OF THE COLD AND RAINY SEASON IN THAT AREA. HE SAID THAT UNHCR HAD ALREADY DISTRIBUTED 29,000 BLANKETS IN THE AREA, WHICH HAD BEEN CONTRIBUTED BY THE U.K., OXFAM, AND OTHER UNSPECIFIED AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTS. HE MADE POINT OF EMPHASIZING THAT UNHCR HAD IN PLACE A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTING THE BLANKETS UPON ARRIVAL IN KINSHASA THROUGH THREE SWISS VOLUNTEERS FUNDED BY THE SWISS GOVERNMENT AND A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY NETWORK IN THE AREA, WHICH WOULD ASSURE THAT ALL THE BLANKETS WERE DELIVERED TO THE INTENDED RECIPIENTS (THIS IS INTERPRETED AS AN ALLUSION TO DEFICIENT INTERNAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS IN ZAIRE IN THE PAST).

4. COMMENT: MISSION FEELS THAT THIS IS A WORTHY REQUEST WHICH WE SHOULD RESPOND TO POSITIVELY IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, WE HAVE OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME EMPHASIZED TO UNHCR THE PLIGHT OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE. ASSUMING VON ARNIM'S DESCRIPTION IS ACCURATE, THE STATE OF THIS LARGE GROUP OF REFUGEES IS ESPECIALLY DISTRESSING AND WORTHY OF SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION. THEREFORE, IF WE CAN DO SO, IT WOULD SEEM TO MISSION THAT WE SHOULD COOPERATE IN THIS ALREADY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN EFFORT. END COMMENT.

5. EMBASSY KINSHASA MAY WISH TO OFFER ITS COMMENTS WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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REGARD TO MERITS OF THIS APPEAL.

6. DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REQUESTED ASAP. VANDEN HEUVEL

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
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